

# GREAT IDEAS! TAKE ACTION PROJECTS WORTH TAPPING INTO



## A Food Drive with Great Taste

Have you ever peeked into the collection box for a food bank? Cans of beans, boxed cereal, canned beets and peas, tomato paste. Can you imagine a meal made of that combo? Yuck!

Most food banks work hard to provide healthy and appealing food. Some take in huge donations from food companies and restaurants. Some offer—and ask for—fresh and frozen food along with the usual canned and dry foods. So how could you and your Girl Scout team kick things up a notch the next time someone suggests you take part in a food drive? Here's an idea:

Call a food bank in your area and perhaps arrange to meet with members of the staff or volunteers. Maybe they can even visit your team. Get an idea of how the food bank operates, who it serves, what it needs, and what its clients might want. Based on what you learn, you could end up doing something like this:

Your team of Girl Scouts decides to think about some simple, nutritious, and oh, so yummy meals that are easy to make—and are exactly what the people served by the food bank want. Maybe it's whole-wheat pasta with tomato sauce (you can even break down the sauce into donated items: canned tomatoes, tomato paste, olive oil), followed by a peach-and-pineapple dessert. Once you settle on a meal (or two or three), you create a plan to collect only the needed ingredients for those meals. That means being specific about the needs of your food drive in all your posters, e-mails, and fliers—and any time you talk about what you're doing. Remember: You want to be giving the food bank what its customers want. So be clear that you are collecting only the foods on your list.

Once donations roll in, you and your team sort them into "Meal in a Bag" donations ready to go to your local food bank—or deliver them in whatever way the food bank prefers. If you take the "Meal in a Bag" route, you could even include a recipe card or two in each bag and note what fresh food, if any, is needed to complete the meal. It's possible the food bank has those fresh additions on hand to add in.

## No food bank in your community?

You can offer this Take Action project through a place of worship or a community center—or any other location that helps feed people in need.

### Be a Protector!

Suppose you and your team are animal and nature lovers and you want to help the environment, too. What animal or plant needs protection in your neck of the woods? Yes, even urban areas have plants and critters that need protection. So, what's threatened in your area? What's on the nation's endangered-species list? It could be a flying squirrel or a bighorn sheep, the California condor, a whooping crane, or even a crow. It could be the Texas prairie dawn-flower or the Willamette daisy. It could even be a spider. (Don't tell Dez, but about a dozen of her kin are on the endangered list!)

So huddle up and figure out who to talk to and who to meet—park rangers, local environmental groups, Nature Conservancy members, local Sierra Club representatives. Many people in your community are likely to be knowledgeable about plants and animals that could use your help.

If you pool your moxie and do some research, you and your team can become experts on an endangered or threatened species in your area. Once you know all the facts, you could create a care kit about the best ways to protect the species and its habitat. Then make copies of your kit and distribute it—at your school, other area schools, or perhaps throughout the whole community—so everyone can work to protect what's threatened in your area. You'll have learned so much that someone may want to interview you!

To see how Girl Scouts are changing the world with their Take Action projects, visit <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/for-girls/girls-changing-the-world.html>. Tell us about your project, and it might be featured on the site too!

